

# 2003 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

## Important Facts about the 2003 Index Total:

The 3,969 serious crimes recorded in Cambridge in 2003 represents City's lowest Uniform Crime Reporting Index number reported to the FBI in over forty years. Eisenhower was president the last time fewer than 4000 serious crimes were registered in the City. The serious crime index had not varied from a total of between 4350 and 4450 incidents for the past six years. The 2003 decline of 10%, 435 fewer incidents than in 2002, is the third largest yearly decline since 1980. Further analysis indicates that despite declines in Murder, Rape and Aggravated Assault, violent crime increased by 3% in 2003, as these drops were offset by a 17% increase in Robbery. The 10% decline in Burglary and the 14% drop in Larceny propelled the 12% slide in property crime when compared with the 2002 figures.

## Murder:

- The most common weapons used in Cambridge murders since 1990 are knives (10 incidents) and handguns (6 incidents).
- In 1973, there were ten murders committed in Cambridge. The peak of 14 murders occurred in 1972.
- Murders in Cambridge usually fall into three situational types: domestic, drug or gang related, and homeless against homeless.
- Nationally, cities of 100,000 people average 10 murders per year.
- Arrests were made in all three of the 2003 murders in Cambridge. Two of the six murders in the City in 2002 remain under investigation. Seven of the 32 murder cases reported in Cambridge since 1990 remain unsolved.

## Rape:

- The total of seven rapes reported in Cambridge in 2003 represents a 30-year low.
- In an average year, the investigative unit clears 70-80% of all reported rapes. The Sexual Assault Unit reports that five of the seven cases in 2003 were cleared by arrest.
- Prior to 1998, Cambridge averaged four to seven stranger to stranger rapes each year, two to four were usually street abductions or "blitz" rapes, one or two are usually home invasions, and the remainder are "contact" rapes. In the five years since 1998, there have been a combined total of five blitz rapes and two classified as home invasions.
- Since 1980, there has only been one stranger-to-stranger "street" rape pattern in Cambridge: the "Rainy Day Rapist" who struck the Fresh Pond area in 1981.
- Nationally, cities with a population of 100,000 residents record an average of 35 rapes per year.
- Further analysis of "blitz" type rapes in Cambridge over the past few years indicates a trend of weekend night incidents between the hours of midnight and 4am.

## **Robbery:**

- In 2003, there were 229 robberies reported, which translates to a 17% increase when compared with the 2002 total.
- Central Square, the periphery of Harvard Square, Upper Cambridgeport between Franklin and Erie Streets, and the 300 to 400 blocks of Rindge Ave between Russell Field and the Alewife MBTA Station were considered “hot spots” for street robberies in Cambridge during 2003.
- Forty-five percent of all street robberies in 2003 were “predatory robberies” or “muggings,” in which one or two offenders approached someone with a weapon or threat of weapon and demanded money.
- From 1970 to 1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies per year. Since 1991, that average has plummeted to 33 per year. However, a spike in bank robberies that materialized after September 11, 2001, resurfaced during the fourth of quarter of 2002 and continued during 2003, producing the highest total for this crime type in a number of years.

## **Burglary:**

- Over the past twenty years, burglary in Cambridge has decreased by 54%. A small increase was recorded between 2000 and 2002 but overall burglary decreased 10% in 2003
- Mid-Cambridge experienced the highest number of housebreaks in 2003, characterized by patterns that started in late August and ran through November.
- Housebreaks peaked in September and October with notable pattern developing in North Cambridge and Peabody.
- Since 2002, there has been a 32% decrease in commercial burglaries in Cambridge.

## **Larceny:**

- The crime of larceny accounted for 60% of the total crime index in Cambridge in 2003, down from 62% in 2002.
- The larceny total of 2389 incidents represents the lowest total reported in Cambridge in thirty years.
- Larceny from motor vehicles has consistently averaged close to 20% of the serious crime total in Cambridge each year. In 2003, the percentage fell to 16% of the index.
- The most common method of entry into motor vehicles is by smashing the window. This method was reported in 39% of the incidents.
- Larcenies from persons are concentrated around commercial areas, with Harvard Square producing the highest totals.
- For the third consecutive year, larceny of bicycles (-20%) declined in Cambridge.

## **Auto Theft:**

- Auto theft continues to decline in the City. This year’s number represents the second lowest total in 40 years.
- Toyotas and Hondas accounted for 38% of all stolen vehicles in Cambridge in 2003. The Honda Civic, the Honda Accord and Acura Integra are the three most targeted models.
- Cambridgeport reported the most thefts in 2003, with 72 incidents, a 28% increase from last year.